

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 038204
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:SSOBER:BDF
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
NSC:WQUANDT
PM:RERICSON
P:PCHABIB
NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.
H:BATWOOD
S/S-O - JTHYDEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 038204

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, IS, SA

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON AIRCRAFT SALES

1. THE SECRETARY WILL ANNOUNCE AT 1:15 P.M. ON FEBRUARY 14 THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO APPROVE SALES OF CERTAIN AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, SUBJECT TO THE USUAL CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW. YOU SHOULD FURNISH TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENT (BEING SENT SEPTEL) TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, NOTING THAT WE WISHED HIM TO HAVE IT BEFORE IT WAS RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC.

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2. IN CONVEYING TEXT OF STATEMENT, YOU SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- IN DECIDING TO APPROVE AT THIS TIME SALE OF ADDITIONAL F-15S AND ALSO F-16S TO ISRAEL, PRESIDENT HAS PLACED PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON UNEQUIVOCAL U.S. COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY. THIS WAS HIS OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION, AFTER WEIGHING ALL FACTORS INCLUDING LIKELIHOOD THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW ARMS SALES AT MOMENT WHEN MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING

EFFORTS ARE AT DELICATE STAGE CAN GENERATE CONTROVERSY AND COMPLICATE THOSE EFFORTS.

-- PRESIDENT HAD IN MIND BEGIN'S REQUEST THAT DECISION ON AIRCRAFT SALES NOT BE HELD UP PENDING WEIZMAN'S VISIT HERE NEXT MONTH, AT WHICH TIME WE WILL DISCUSS OTHER PENDING ISRAELI REQUESTS FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT APPROVED FOR ISRAEL FALLS SHORT OF ISRAEL'S FULL REQUEST. HOWEVER, OUR DECISION TAKES INTO ACCOUNT OUR ASSESSMENT OF ISRAEL'S SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT POLICY, WHICH SPECIFICALLY RECOGNIZES OUR HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

-- AS THE SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENT WILL NOTE, CONTRACTS FOR THE SALE OF THE AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION WILL BE SIGNED OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS. IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL, WE ANTICIPATE ONE LETTER OF OFFER AND AGREEMENT (LOA) FOR THE 15 F-15 AIRFRAMES IN FY 78, AND TWO LOA'S FOR 40 F-16 AND 35 F-16 AIRFRAMES IN FY 78 AND FY 79 RESPECTIVELY. THE PURPOSE OF SPREADING THE LOA'S OUT OVER MORE THAN THE

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CURRENT YEAR IS TO ENABLE THE ADMINISTRATION TO MANAGE THE OVERALL ARMS TRANSFER CEILING IN SUCH A WAY AS TO LEAVE ROOM FOR OTHER MAJOR PRIORITY SALES. THIS WILL NOT RPT NOT AFFECT THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR DELIVERY OF EITHER THE F-15S OR F-16S TO ISRAEL. WE CURRENTLY ANTICIPATE THAT THE FIRST DELIVERIES OF THE ADDITIONAL F-15S WILL BEGIN IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1981; THAT THE FIRST DELIVERY OF THE F-16S WILL BEGIN IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1981; AND THAT DELIVERIES WILL CONTINUE UNINTERRUPTEDLY THEREAFTER UNTIL THE FULL NUMBERS ARE DELIVERED.

-- THE PRESIDENT DECIDED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO SELL SOME F-5 AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT IN LIGHT OF THE GOE'S MAJOR COMMITMENT TO THE PEACEMAKING EFFORT AND EGYPT'S LEGITIMATE NEED FOR SOME UPGRADING OF ITS DEFENSIVE AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY. THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL IS AWARE OF THE PRESSURES ON SADAT IN THIS RESPECT FOLLOWING THE TERMINATION OF SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLY TO EGYPT AND SADAT'S DECISION TO RELY ON THE UNITED STATES AS A PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER OF A CONSTRUCTIVE FOREIGN POLICY LOOKING TO PEACE THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN WAR. WE BELIEVE THE GOI IS ALSO AWARE THAT THE 50 F-5S THE PRESIDENT PROPOSES FOR SALE TO EGYPT FALL SUBSTANTIALLY SHORT, BOTH IN NUMBERS AND IN TYPE, OF THE ADVANCED AIRCRAFT WHICH EGYPT WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN FROM THE U.S.

-- THE PRESIDENT DECIDED THAT THE SALE OF 60 F-15S TO SAUD ARABIA (DELIVERY OF WHICH WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL 1981) WAS REASONABLE IN TERMS OF THE SAUDIS' CURRENT VERY LIMITED DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY, AND ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING CONTINUED FULL SAUDI COMMITMENT TO A COURSE OF FUNDAMENTAL

COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES ON A VARIETY OF HIGHLY IMPORTANT ISSUES. WE BELIEVE THIS SALE WILL DO MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE WE COULD DO TO HELP MAINTAIN AND FOSTER A CONSTRUCTIVE, MODERATING SAUDI ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO
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-- WE BELIEVE THAT THE SUPPLY OF THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT ISRAEL'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY IN THE REGION. OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY REMAINS PARAMOUNT.

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-- ANOTHER IMPORTANT REASON FOR CONSIDERING AT ONE TIME THE PROPOSED AIRCRAFT SALES TO ALL THREE COUNTRIES IS THAT THEY ARE WIDELY PERCEIVED AS BEING INTERRELATED AND AS HAVING RELEVANCE TO THE QUESTION OF SECURITY AND STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ALSO, THE CONGRESS QUITE RIGHTLY WANTS TO KNOW TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE THE TOTALITY OF WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AREA WHEN WE PROPOSE A MAJOR SALE TO ANY COUNTRY IN THE REGION.

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APPROVED BY S/S-O:LRFLEISCHER

PM:RAERICSON, JR., ACTING

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